

## BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

Comments on the Biodiversity Duty Report made by Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2026

Date considered by Cabinet: 24 March 2026

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the Scrutiny meeting	Cabinet response
C1	<p><b>Local Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):</b> Members welcomed the commitment that BNG should be delivered locally rather than offset through distant sites. Concerns were raised about the national approach to 'offsetting' and were keen to avoid this.</p>	<p>Officers explained BNG mitigation process is subject to a hierarchy for mitigation starting with on-site being the preference, and confirmed the scheme was designed to incentivise local delivery. They noted that developers were generally keen to provide biodiversity gains on or as near to their sites as possible.</p>	
C2	<p><b>Strategic Biodiversity:</b> Reference was made to the UK's international commitment to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030 ('30 by 30') and it was suggested that this could be used as a guiding principle locally.</p>	<p>Officers acknowledged the comment.</p>	
C3	<p><b>Reporting periods/future reporting:</b> Members queried the length of the next reporting period as the legislation allows a future report to be published at any point in the next five years.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that this could mean a long gap before a report is published especially considering the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that timelines for future reporting had not yet been agreed, but this was something cabinet would confirm.</p> <p>It was noted that progress could be communicated through existing council reporting processes.</p> <p>In light of these comments officers suggest an additional recommendation to provide clarity :</p>	

		4. AGREES THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD FOR THE NEXT BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT TO BE FROM 1 JANUARY 2026 TO 31 DECEMBER 2030.	
<b>C4</b>	<b>Measuring success:</b> Members questioned how success would be measured, and it was suggested that Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) be introduced.	Officers confirmed that BNG was currently measured/reported through a KPI in the planning service, and this would continue. Measuring/reporting on wider actions is something that could be considered.	